

Now That I'm a Stream Team, What's Next?



Missouri Stream Team . . . promoting citizen awareness and involvement in river and stream conservation.

● EDUCATION ● STEWARDSHIP ● ADVOCACY ●

Stream Team is a network of people concerned about Missouri streams.

As a Team member you will have the opportunity to learn more about the problems confronting Missouri streams and the actions needed to maintain or restore their health. You will also have the opportunity to get involved in many different kinds of river conservation efforts. The amount of time you commit to these efforts is subject only to your willingness to get the job done.

Listed here are some questions new Stream Team members commonly ask.

Do I have to adopt a stream?

No, stream adoption is not a requirement, but you are encouraged to adopt a river or stream of your choice. Adopting a stream will help to give your Team a focal point. Adoption is flexible; more than one Team can adopt the same stream, or one Team can adopt several streams. You will be provided with information and training opportunities to help you assess your stream and learn ways to address problems. If you decide to adopt a stream, try to choose:

- ✓ a stream that is meaningful to you or your group
- ✓ a location that is convenient
- ✓ an accessible area (streams on public lands or in areas where you will be able to obtain landowner permission for access)
- ✓ a small section that is representative of your stream but not too large for you to be able to accomplish your goals. (Don't bite off more than you can chew.)

Any stream can be adopted. Adoption does not require you to stay with one stream. You can change your adopted stream at any time or adopt additional streams. Smaller creeks are safer for children; bigger rivers may require more experienced hands. Remember, landowner cooperation is required for projects on private property.

What should I do first?

Your first step is to take a closer look at your stream by completing a Stream Team Inventory. The Inventory is a two-stage evaluation process that documents stream conditions and uncovers problems. An easy-to-read Inventory Manual provides background information and guidance for assessing the condition of your stream. The Inventory Form provides a short description and pictures of healthy and abused streams. You will then rate different components of your stream to assess stream quality. This process will allow you to become more familiar with your stream, identify problems that need attention, and learn more about stream health in general.

Even if you are familiar with the stream, taking a closer look through the Inventory process may be an eye-opening experience. Inventories can be completed periodically to monitor the status and quality of your adopted stream.



What activity options do I have?

As a Stream Team member, you can participate in a wide variety of stream improvement activities, but don't limit yourself to the activities listed here. Check out our *Channels* newsletter or an Activity Report for ideas, or just be creative! Allow your stream's needs, your personal interests, and your expertise guide your activities and involvement in Stream Team.

➔ **Litter Pickups** - This is one of the most popular activities because all types of groups can participate. When planning a litter pickup, it is particularly important to make arrangements for trash collection/disposal. Some of the materials commonly collected from streams, (tires, lead acid batteries, major appliances, and oil) are banned from landfills. You will need to make special arrangements to dispose of these items (call us for details).

➔ **Water Quality Monitoring** - If your Team is interested in monitoring stream water quality, you may want to become a Volunteer Water Quality Monitor. Through special training workshops, volunteers learn physical, chemical, and biological monitoring techniques and actually gather information. The data is used to establish a baseline of information and to locate water quality problems for more detailed studies and resolution. This information will help the Department of Natural Resources follow long-term trends in statewide water quality.

➔ **Greenways** - Teams can work with city officials, like the city council or local Parks & Recreation Department, to establish natural areas along urban streams. Is this a possibility for your community?



Can you identify this organism?

Answer: This organism is an aquatic macroinvertebrate called a mayfly. Mayflies live a portion of their life in the water and are an indicator of good water quality. If you'd like to learn more... check out our water quality monitoring opportunities!

Getting started is as easy as taking a walk along a stream bank!



➔ **Education** - Spread the word about stream conservation and your efforts to protect streams. You may want to set up a booth at a county fair or other local event or help a teacher pass on Missouri streams facts to students.

➔ **Zebra Mussel Monitoring** - The invasion of zebra mussels can harm our native mussels, cause problems at utility and industrial water intakes, and disrupt aquatic food chains. Zebra mussel larvae can easily be carried from one body of water to another on boat hulls, bait buckets, or anything moist! How can you help? Ask for our guidelines on where and how to monitor for zebra mussels.

➔ **Advocacy** - Advocacy involves speaking out on behalf of Missouri streams. Stream Team is a grassroots effort to protect and improve Missouri streams. By working together, Teams can remind federal, state, and local policy makers and officials that our streams are one of the state's greatest resources.

Here are a few more activities for your Team to consider!

➡ **Storm Drain Stenciling** - Storm drains are sometimes misused for the disposal of paint, motor oil, antifreeze, pesticides, and other wastes. Many people are not aware that storm drains lead to nearby streams, rivers, and lakes. After obtaining permission from the proper authorities, you and your Team can stencil the message, “Dump No Waste, Drains To Stream,” near storm drains as a visible reminder of the consequences of improper waste disposal in storm drains. This could become a project for your entire community. Stencils are provided; your Stream Team will need to provide paint and other supplies.



➡ **Watershed Mapping** - By following our watershed mapping guide, you'll learn to use local sources of information to map landmarks and land use near your stream. Potential water quality impacts will be included in your research. This will give you a better understanding of what's happening in your stream.

➡ **Stream Stabilization Projects** - Biologists are working throughout the state to improve and stabilize Missouri streams. At times, they need the assistance of Team members to complete these projects. Stream Team members can also work on their own projects like tree planting. Biologists can assist with more complicated stream improvement projects like those designed to slow bank erosion.

➡ **Forestkeepers** - This is an opportunity for all Missourians, urban and rural, to get involved in understanding and gathering important information about the condition of trees and forests. You may be interested in monitoring trees in your community, on your property, or near your adopted stream.

➡ **Association Building** - Because there is strength in numbers, Stream Teams around the state are joining together to work as larger groups to accomplish bigger goals. These groups are called Associations. Usually Associations are established regionally or within watershed boundaries.

➡ **Mentoring**- What is a Stream Team mentor? It's someone who becomes an advisor and a supporter, willing to share knowledge and give encouragement. Do you think you or your Team would benefit from having a mentor or becoming a mentor to others? If so, contact your Stream Team Coordinator today.

➡ **Adopt-An-Access** - Would you like to adopt a river or lake access? Access managers are looking forward to working with Stream Teams, and will greatly appreciate assistance with access maintenance.

Should we report our Team activities?

Yes! It's important to report your activities so we can track the program's progress and plan for the future. Complete a “Stream Team Activity Report” after each activity. Don't forget to request your T-shirts and other free “thank you” items!

Stream Team Is Sponsored by:

Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Conservation Federation of Missouri



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Good luck with your activities!